

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 261815Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7505

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 RABAT 0413

EXDIS

FOR INR DIRECTOR SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MO, AG, US, PFOR, MOPS, MASS

SUBJECT: INR ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN CONFLICT

REF: STATE 014196

1. WE WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON INR'S ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL FOR ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN CONFLICT OVER COMING SIX MONTHS AND TO MAKE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO INR'S PROJECTED LONGER-TERM TREATMENT OF ISSUE.

2. IMMEDIATE FUTURE. WE ARE IN BASIC AGREEMENT WITH INR'S ASSESSMENT FOR SIX MONTH PERIOD AS OUTLINED PARA 3 REFTTEL, ALTHOUGH OUR PERCEPTIONS ON CERTAIN POINTS ARE AT VARIANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE QUESTION STATEMENT THAT HASSAN WILL NOT MAKE ANY MOVES WHICH WOULD MAKE AGREEMENT POSSIBLE BETWEEN ALGIERS AND RABAT. ALTHOUGH ACTUAL NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IS NO DOUBT REMOTE. KING HAS BEEN TRYING TO KEEP DIPLOMATIC DOOR OPEN TO ALGERIA AND HAS SENT VARIOUS EMISSARIES TO ALGIERS DURING RECENT TENSE PERIOD. HIS PURPOSE IS PRESUMABLY TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF DIPLOMATIC FLEXIBILITY AND REASONABLENESS AND AT SAME TIME TO HOLD ALGERIAN TEMPERATURES DOWN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. KING SEEMS ALSO TO BE KEEPING IDEA OF POSSIBLE MEDIATION BY THIRD PARTY UP HIS SLEEVE, ANOTHER USEFUL DEVICE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

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AT SAME TIME, WE WOULD NOT RULE OUT COMPLETELY MOROCCAN

RESURFACING AT SOME POINT OF RATIFICATION OF 1972 BORDER AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS IN EXCHANGE FOR END TO GUERRILLA WAR IN SAHARA. MAIN OBSTACLE TO SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT THIS, EVEN WITH OTHER POSSIBLE INDUCEMENTS, MAY NOT ADD UP TO A SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE MOROCCAN OFFER TO ASSUAGE ALGERIANS OVER SAHARA. MOREOVER, AS CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF TENSIONS CONTINUES, MOROCCAN PUBLIC OPINION LIKELY TO DEVELOP DECREASING TOLERANCE TOWARD RATIFICATION, ALREADY AN UNPOPULAR ISSUE. BOTH ISTIQLAL AND USFP PRESS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN TAKING INCREASINGLY STRIDENT LINE ON THIS QUESTION, UNHAMPERED BY THE USUALLY HEAVY-HANDED CENSOR.

3. WE ALSO SERIOUSLY QUESTION INR ASSUMPTION THAT SIGNIFICANT NEW MOROCCAN ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE US WOULD LEAD TO INCREASED TENSIONS. (WE HAVE ALREADY ELABORATED ON THIS ISSUE AT LENGTH IN RABAT 257.) QUITE THE CONTRARY, GREATEST RISK TO PEACE IN OUR VIEW STEMS FROM CONTINUING MARKED MOROCCAN MILITARY INFERIORITY, WHICH SEEMS TO US MORE LIKELY TO TEMPT ALGERIANS INTO MILITARY ACTIVISM THAN IF MOROCCO PERCEIVED AS STRENGTHENING ITS MILITARY CAPACITY IN COOPERATION WITH U.S. (CF. PARA 19). SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLIES PROVIDED THUS FAR TO ALGERIA, WHICH APPARENTLY RECENTLY AUGMENTED BY LIBYAN INITIATIVES IN THIS FIELD, STRIKE US AS FAR MORE DESTABILIZING THAN OUR SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO. ANOTHER FACTOR TO BE BORNE IN MIND IS THAT THE U.S. IS NOT MOROCCO'S SOLE ARMS SUPPLIER. FRANCE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS FIELD, AS WITNESSED BY RECENTLY SURFACED PLAN TO PROVIDE SOME 25 MIRAGE F-1S IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, WITH AN APPARENT POSSIBILITY OF 50 MORE. IT SIGNIFICANT THAT GOF AND GOM APPARENTLY AGREED TO LEAKING OF NEWS OF THIS DEAL, ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION(RABAT 294). SOVIETS IN PAST ALSO PROVIDED ARMS TO MOROCCO WHEN IT SEEMED THAT ANY CONFLICT WOULD BE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN.

4. FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE, WE WOULD EXPECT A POINT OF MAXIMUM RISK OF SERIOUS CONFLICT AT SUCH TIME AS MOROCCANS MOVE IN FORCE TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR HOLD OVER REMAINING POLISARIO-CONTROLLED AREAS IN NORTHEASTERN SAHARA, AND SPECIFICALLY MAHBES. UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW ALGERIANS MIGHT REACT IS NO DOUBT A MAJOR REASON FOR MOROCCAN HESITATION THUS FAR. MOROCCANS CANNOT BE
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EXPECTED TO TOLERATE WELL-ADVERTISED PRESENCE OF POLISARIO STRONGHOLDS INDEFINITELY, HOWEVER, AND ARE LIKELY TO MOVE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. SHOOTING DOWN OF MOROCCAN F-5 OVER MAURITANIA BY POLISARIO "SAM-6" ON JAN. 21 MAY STIFFEN MOROCCAN RESOLVE, BUT FULL IMPLICATIONS NOT YET APPARENT.

5. AS FOR IMPACT ON MOROCCO'S INTERNAL SITUATION OF A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT LEVEL OF GUERRILLA OPERATIONS IN THE SAHARA, WE

WOULD JUDGE THAT KING WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY IMPRESSIVE SUPPORT FROM MOROCCAN POPULATION AND POLITICAL PARTIES. MAIN THREAT TO INTERNAL STABILITY WOULD BE A SERIOUS SETBACK TO ARMED FORCES AT HANDS OF ALGERIANS (SEE PARA 10 BELOW). CONTINUED POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS ALSO LIKELY UNTIL SECURITY SITUATION BECOMES MORE NORMAL.

6. FOLLOWING ARE OUR THOUGHTS ON PROSPECTS FOR ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONS OVER NEXT TWO-THREE YEARS IN CONNECTION WITH PROJECTED LONGER-TERM INR ANALYSIS:

7. END OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE? ASSUMING BOUMEDIENE REGIME HAS GIVEN UP ON "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" WITH MOROCCAN MONARCHY, AND PARTICULARLY IF ALGERIAN RESENTMENT OVER SAHARA REMAINS HIGH, A PROLONGED PERIOD OF ANTAGONISM SEEMS INEVITABLE BUT WE AT SAME TIME BELIEVE MOROCCO FOR ITS PART WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE EFFORTS TO AVOID DIRECT CONFLICT. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE CURRENT RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN SAHARA COULD REMAIN THE PRIMARY OUTLET FOR ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN TENSIONS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD RATHER THAN JUST THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, BARRING ESCALATORY MOVES BY THE PARTIES. (TO WHAT EXTENT RECENT SHOOTDOWN OF MOROCCAN F-5 BY SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE WILL RAISE TENSIONS NOT YET CLEAR.) FURTHER ESCALATION WILL DEPEND PRIMARILY ON HOW MUCH OF AN EFFORT ALGERIA DECIDES TO PUT INTO BACKING THE POLISARIO AND SECONDARILY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MOROCCANS IN CONTROLLING POLISARIO FORAYS. CONTINUING GUERRILLA WARFARE WOULD NO DOUBT ENTAIL AN OUTSIDE CHANCE OF A MORE SERIOUS FLAREUP, AGAIN MAINLY DEPENDENT ON ALGERIANS. SHOULD MOROCCAN CASUALTIES--ESPECIALLY INSIDE MOROCCAN TERRITORY--MOUNT SERIOUSLY, GOM WOULD ALSO FIND ITSELF UNDER PRESSURES TO REACT MORE FIRMLY. VARIOUS SUPPLEMENTARY OPTIONS, HIGHER OR LOWER ON SCALE OF VIOLENCE, OF COURSE ALSO EXIST: TERRORISM, INTERNAL SUBVERSION BY BOTH SIDES, CONTINUING FREEZE
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ON TRADE AND TRAVEL, COMPETITION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS ON ISSUES RANGING FROM ANGOLA TO PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND BIDDING FOR CONCRETE AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, INCLUDING THE US AND USSR.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7506

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EXDIS

FOR INR DIRECTOR SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

8. MOROCCANS, IN OUR ASSESSMENT, ARE CURRENTLY TAKING A RELATIVELY CAUTIOUS APPROACH VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA WHICH SEEMS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THIS APPROACH IS UNDOUBTEDLY BASED ON MOROCC'S RECOGNITION OF ITS CLEAR OVERALL MILITARY INFERIORITY, WHICH PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN TANKS AND AIRCRAFT. INITIAL AVOIDANCE BY MOROCCAN FORCES OF EXTREME NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF SAHARA, NEAR ALGERIAN BORDER, WHILE TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF MILITARY SUPERIORITY IN REST OF SAHARA TO PRESS CONSOLIDATION FITS INTO THIS PATTERN (SEE PARA 4 ABOVE). SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS HAS ALSO BEEN RELATIVELY MILD IN TREATMENT OF ALGERIA, ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION PAPERS HAVE BEEN UNLEASHED FAIRLY REGULARLY WITH NO PERCEPTIBLE RESTRAINT FROM THE CENSOR. (RECENT LOSS OF F-5 OFFICIALLY TREATED SO FAR WITH RELATIVE CAUTION WITHOUT DIRECT MENTION OF ALGERIANS BY NAME IN GOM COMMUNIQUE ON SUBJECT.) THUS, ALTHOUGH ALGERIANS PROFESS TO SEE POSSIBILITY OF MOROCCAN INITIATIVE FOR DIRECT ATTACK AGAINST ALGERIA (E.G. ALGIERS 124, PARA 6), WE DOUBT MOROCCANS WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER SUCH AN INITIATIVE FROM POSITION OF OVERALL MILITARY INFERIORITY, ESPECIALLY AS MATTERS BASICALLY GOING THEIR WAY IN SAHARA UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. EVEN ALGERIAN ESCALATION WITHIN SAHARA, WE WOULD THINK, MORE LIKELY TO BE MET BY MOROCCANS WITHIN SAME LIMITED CONTEXT, INASMUCH AS EXTENSION OF WAR COULD HAVE PRINCIPAL NEGATIVE RESULT OF BRINGING OVERALL ALGERIAN MILITARY SUPERIORITY TO BEAR AGAINST MOROCCO ALONG A LONG FRONT.

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9. WHAT IF WAR? WE ASSUME THAT IF ALL-OUT WAR BROKE OUT, ALGERIANS WOULD HAVE AN INITIAL PERHAPS TELLING ADVANTAGE ALONG MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN FRONTIER. AT FIRST, MOROCCANS WOULD PRESUMABLY BE FORCED TO FIGHT LARGELY ON THE DEFENSIVE, TRYING TO

MINIMIZE LIKELY ALGERIAN SEIZURE OF TERRITORY TO EAST OF ATLAS MOUNTAINS. IN NORTH, ALGERIAN FORCES WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO TAKE OUJDA, BUT MIGHT WELL BOG DOWN NEAR TAZA IF HISTORY TELLS US ANYTHING. THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO RUN INTO SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN THE MOUNTAINS. GOM, HAVING ITS MAJOR MILITARY STRENGTH IN SOUTH, WOULD PRESUMABLY TRY TO SEIZE TINDOUF. ALGERIAN AIR SUPERIORITY WOULD PROBABLY GIVE ALGERIANS RELATIVELY FREE REIN IN THE SKY. HOSTILITIES MIGHT NOT LAST LONG, WITH BOTH SIDES LOOKING TO PREDICTABLE FRENETIC MEDIATION OF ARAB BROTHERS.

10. FULL MOROCCAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM IS, IN OUR JUDGMENT, FIRMLY BEHIND KING'S SAHARA POLICY. HEIGHTENED TENSION WITH ALGERIA WOULD ONLY UNIFY RANKS FURTHER. HOWEVER, ALL OUT WAR WOULD PRESENT POTENTIALLY SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR KING HASSAN, IN THAT POOR SHOWING BY ARMY AND AIR FORCE WOULD PROBABLY BE HELD AGAINST KING PERSONALLY BECAUSE OF HIS DELIBERATE POLICY SINCE 1971 AND 1972 COUP ATTEMPTS OF KEEPING MILITARY DIVIDED AND WEAK FOR INTERNAL REASONS. ALGERIANS UNLIKELY TO BENEFIT, HOWEVER, AS ANY MOROCCAN SUCCESS OR REGIME LIKELY TO BE AS ANTI-ALGERIAN AS BEFORE.

11. SOVIET ANGLE. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ENVISAGE NO LIKELIHOOD OF MOROCCAN CALL FOR OR WELCOMING OF INCREASED SOVIET INVOLVEMENT. MOROCCANS BELIEVE SOVIETS ALREADY HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH ALGERIANS AND IN CASE OF OUTRIGHT HOSTILITIES WOULD SIDE EVEN MORE OPENLY WITH THEIR CLIENTS. MAIN AIM OF PRESENT MOROCCAN POLICY TOWARD SOVIETS HAS THUS FAR BEEN TO MINIMIZE SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ALGERIA BY KEEPING OPEN IMPLICIT THREAT TO SOVIET PRESENCE IN MOROCCO. FOR THEIR PART, THE SOVIETS HAVE ALSO BEEN CAREFUL TO KEEP FROM CLOSING OFF ALL OPTIONS HERE.

12. MAURITANIA IN CONFRONTATION AND WAR. MAURITANIAN ASPECT, WE BELIEVE, MUST ALSO BE ADDRESSED IN ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN EQUATION. (WE NOTE NOUAKCHOTT NOT ADDRESSEE FOR REFTEL.) MOROCCAN FORCES ARE ALREADY OPERATING WITHIN MAURITANIA'S PORTION OF SAHARA AND WITHIN MAURITANIA ITSELF AT GIRM REQUEST.

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MOROCCANS VIEW MAURITANIA AS WEAK LINK, VULNERABLE TO ALGERIAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL PRESSURES. RABAT NO DOUBT RECOGNIZES THAT ITS OWN PHYSICAL CONSOLIDATION IN THE SHARA, AS WELL AS MAINTENANCE OF POLITICAL SUPPORT OF A NUMBER OF AFRICAN AND OTHER STATES FOR SAHARA PARTITION, INTIMATELY TIED WITH KEEPING GIRM MILITARILY VIABLE AND ON PRESENT POLITICAL COURSE. SERIOUS UNDERMINING OF GIRM BY ALGERIA COULD ALSO PRESENT U.S. WITH DIFFICULT DECISIONS AS TO U.S. RESPONSE, INCLUDING DEGREE TO WHICH WE WOULD WANT TO BOLSTER MOROCCO TO WITHSTAND INCREASED ALGERIAN PRESSURES.

13. EFFECTS ON U.S. LONG-TERM MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN CONFRONTATION

SHORT OF WAR WOULD PROBABLY ENTAIL FURTHER POLARIZATION IN AREA, WITH ALGERIA AND MOROCCO SEEKING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM GREAT POWER FRIENDS WHILE GROWING INCREASINGLY SUSPICIOUS AND HOSTILE REGARDING SUPPORTERS OF THE OTHER SIDE. IN MOROCCO, WE COULD EXPECT GROWING PRESSURES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY ARMS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT AND WOULD FIND OURSELVES UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY FOR SIGNS OF WAVERING OF SUPPORT OF OUR FRIENDS OR TILTING TOWARD THE OTHER SIDE. IF DETERMINED TO BE IN US INTEREST, WE COULD THROUGH SELECTIVE INDUCEMENTS ENCOURAGE MOROCCO TO MOVE FURTHER AWAY FROM WHAT IN THE PAST HAS BEEN A WELL-DISPOSED BUT OCCASIONALLY SOMEWHAT RESERVED ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US AND OUR GLOBAL CONCERNS (AS REFLECTED IN DIFFERENCES ON SOME UN ISSUES AND THIRD WORLD ISSUES, FOR EXAMPLE) IN THE DIRECTION OF A MUCH CLOSER POLITICAL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE BOARD. SOME INCIPIENT GAINS FOR U.S. ARE IN FACT ALREADY IN EVIDENCE, SUCH AS IMPROVING ACCESS TO PORTS FOR US NAVY AND RELATIVE GOM FIRMNESS ON ANGOLA. (ON LATTER ISSUE, IT SEEMS LIKELY MOROCCANS WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR LESS CONCERNED DID THEY NOT SEE A PARALLEL IN PRESENT SAHARAN SITUATION.) IT IS ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT IN LONG TERM WE COULD APPLY SOME OF OUR INCREASED ACCESS TO AND INFLUENCE WITH THE REGIME TOWARD INDUCING AT LEAST MINIMAL MOROCCAN STEPS TOWARD INTERNAL POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO PLAN ANY MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION WITH GREAT CARE IN VIEW OF THE KING'S PROPENSITY FOR MONOPOLIZING POWER. INTERNALLY, STABILITY OF REGIME WOULD BE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO SOLIDIFY IN ANY CASE IN FACE OF PERSISTING OUTSIDE THREATS, A PLUS FOR US PRESENCE AT CURRENT LEVEL AND ANY FUTURE BOLSTERING WHICH MIGHT BE IN OUR INTEREST. MOST OF MOROCCAN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME A MORE PROMINENT US ROLE IN SUPPORT OF

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MOROCCO VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA, PROVIDED US NOT PERCEIVED AS INFRINGING ON MOROCCAN FREEDOM OF ACTION OR AS BECOMING OVERLY DOMINANT A FACTOR IN THE COUNTRY (THIS IS NOT TOO MUCH OF A PROBLEM, AS FRENCH LIKELY RETAIN MOST VISIBLE FOREIGN PRESENCE). MEANWHILE, MOROCCAN ECONOMY WOULD NECESSARILY BE UNDER STRAIN IN PURCHASING GROWING QUANTITIES OF ARMS, WHICH WOULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO MOROCCAN DESIRE FOR AUGMENTED US HELP.

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

FOR INR DIRECTOR SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

14. AS TO ALGERIAN REACTION TO A US POLICY OF CLOSER IDENTIFICATION WITH MOROCCO UNDER ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE OF COURSE DEFER TO EMBASSY ALGIERS, BUT WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT LESSENED ALGERIAN RESPONSIVENESS TO US POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONCERNS WOULD BE A SOMEWHAT MARGINAL LOSS, LIMITED OF COURSE BY FACT GOA ALREADY NOTABLY UNRESPONSIVE TO MOST OF THESE CONCERNS. EMBASSY ALGIERS CAN ALSO COMMENT MORE AUTHORITATIVELY ON HOW MUCH AN ALGERIAN DECISION TO CANCEL COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS WOULD HURT US, AND WHETHER SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT INFLECT HURT THEM EVEN MORE.

15. IN CASE OF ALL-OUT WAR, MOROCCANS COULD BE EXPECTED TO PRESS US HARD FOR WIDE RANGE OF URGENT MILITARY SUPPLIES AND OTHER SUPPORT. INTERNALLY, KING WOULD FACE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS, AS NOTED PARA 10 ABOVE. IF MILITARY SETBACK LED TO DEPOSING OF KING, TRADITIONAL PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION OF COUNTRY WOULD BE OPEN TO QUESTION, ALTHOUGHT NOT NECESSARILY COMPLETELY REVERSED. A WORST-CASE SCENARIO WOULD BE FOR RADICAL ANTI-US REGIME TO TAKE POWER, WITH US LOSING MASSIVELY IN MOROCCO BUT GAINING LITTLE IF ANYTHING IN ALGERIA. MORE PLAUSIBLE WOULD BE A LESS DRASTIC POST-COUP SITUATION. A MILITARY SUCCESSOR REGIME MIGHT WISH TO BE LESS IDENTIFIED WITH US THAN IS CURRENTLY THE CASE, TO STRENGTHEN "REVOLUTIONARY" CREDENTIALS. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, HOWEVER, ANY FORESEEABLE NEW REGIME WOULD PROBABLY
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WELCOME CONTINUATION OF US MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP EXCEPT IN UNLIKELY EVENT THAT MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN TENSIONS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED.

16. A FEW OTHER VARIATIONS ON MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN TENSION COULD INCLUDE A DRAW IN ANY FIGHTING, WITH EFFECT ON US INTERESTS

PROBABLY AMOUNTING TO ABOUT THE SAME AS "NO-WAR, NO-PEACE" ANALYSIS IN PARA 13 ABOVE. IN CASE OF MOROCCAN MILITARY SUCCESS, WHICH AT MAXIMUM MIGHT INVOLVE CAPTURE OF TINDOUF, US WOULD BE LIKELY TO REMAIN IN CONSIDERABLE FAVOR IF WE HAD CONTINUED TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS, ESPECIALLY F-5S AND TANKS. FINALLY, SHOULD PEACE BREAK OUT, US WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO RETAIN SOME POSITIVE BENEFITS FROM A PREVIOUS POLICY OF MILITARY SALES, BUT PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT ENJOY SUCH RECENTLY SURFACED POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES AS INTENSIFIED NAVAL COOPERATION WITH MOROCCO, INCLUDING NPW VISITS.

17. WHERE DO US INTERESTS LIE? FOREGOING ANALYSIS OF US INTERESTS IN THE MAGHREB SUGGESTS THAT CONTINUED US SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO CAN BE EXPECTED ON BALANCE TO FURTHER OUR INTERESTS UNDER MOST SCENARIOS. SUBSTANTIAL GAINS IN MOROCCO, WITHOUT SIMULTANEOUS UNBEARABLE LOSSES IN ALGERIA, SEEM LIKELY. AS IN PAST, STEADINESS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR BEST RESULTS IN IMPLEMENTING OUR MODEST ARMS PROGRAM FOR MOROCCO. WE SHOULD ADHERE TO DELIVERY SCHEDULES, AVOIDING FITS AND STARTS BECAUSE OF ANY MINOR PASSING POLITICAL PHENOMENA, THEREBY ACCUSTOMING BOTH MOROCCO AND ALGERIA TO A SYSTEMATIC AND LONG-TERM US APPROACH. WE SHOULD ALSO BE FLEXIBLE IN RESPONDING TO LEGITIMATE REQUIREMENTS WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM TIME TO TIME OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR PREDETERMINED PROGRAM. ON OTHER HAND, SUBTLETY WILL ALSO BE ESSENTIAL IN AVOIDING MOVES WHICH MIGHT JUSTIFIABLY BE SEEN AS BLATANT TAKING OF SIDES. WHILE KEEPING UP ROUTINE NAVAL CALLS, SCHEDULED ARMS DELIVERIES AND RELATED TRAINING, AND PERIODIC VISITS BY HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS SUCH AS COMSIXTHFLT, THESE EVENTS WILL HAVE TO BE MONITORED IN ORDER TO AVOID AN APPEARANCE OF ABRUPT INTENSIFICATION OF US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT.

18. WITH ABOVE CAVEATS FOR THE FUTURE, WE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THUS FAR OUR PUBLIC POSTURE OF NEUTRALITY ON THE SHARA, WHICH GOM HAS CHOSEN TO SEE IN POSITIVE LIGHT, PLUS OUR BASICALLY
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CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAM TO DATE HAVE STOOD US IN GOOD STEAD AND HAVE OPENED UP NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS. AS ALREADY NOTED, THE (#)

OUR INTERESTS WOULD PROBABLY NOT COME BEFORE MOROCCO SUFFERED SIGNIFICANT MILITARY SETBACK AT HANDS OF ALGERIANS. US MILITARY SUPPLIES PLAY A MULTIPLE ROLE IN THIS CONNECTION: IN HELPING TO DETER HOSTILITIES IN THE FIRST PLACE; IN MINIMIZING THE DAMAGE TO MOROCCO SHOULD WAR NEVERTHELESS ENSUE; AND IN HELPING ASSURE A FUTURE POSITIO OF INFLUENCE WITH MOROCCO EVEN IF SOMETHING APPROACHING WORST-CASE SCENARIO LEADS TO KING'S REPLACEMENT BY A MILITARY REGIME.

19. ONE FINAL POINT: KING HAS BEEN TELLING US THAT SAHARA IS A KIND OF "PRE-ANGOLA" SITUATION, AND THAT USSR LIKELY TO LOOK THIS WAY FOR NEXT TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY IN AFRICA UNLESS DISSUADED BY PLAUSIBLE INDICATIONS THAT US WILL NOT STAND ASIDE. WE RECOGNIZE POSSIBLE SELF-SERVING QUALITY OF KING'S ARGUMENT AND WE QUESTION HIS ASSUMPTION THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARILY THE SOVIETS, RATHER THAN ALGERIA, THAT WILL BE CALLING THE SHOTS FOR MOROCCO'S ADVERSARIES IN THIS REGIONAL QUARREL IN COMING MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE KING'S BASIC ARGUMENT SHOULD LIGHTLY BE DISMISSED. DETERRENCE IS AS VALID A CONCEPT IN REGIONAL DISPUTES AS IN DIRECT GREAT-POWER CONFRONTATION.
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